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October 1, 2008

Greetings,

Thank you for your interest in OSU Extension's Master Gardener™ volunteer program. Applications are now being accepted for the January 2009 offering of the Online Master Gardener course. If you are interested in participating in this course, as one part of the process required to become an OSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer, please complete and return an application. Your application will be routed to and reviewed by Master Gardener Program staff at the county Extension office where you will complete your volunteer service. This volunteer service is the second part of the process required to become an OSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer. After you complete your application, you may be contacted by the county Extension agent that manages the Master Gardener Program in your area. You will be notified by the Statewide Master Gardener Program office, as to whether or not you have been accepted into the January 2009 class of Online Master Gardener trainees.

Acceptance into the online Master Gardener course, as Master Gardener trainee, is contingent upon a mutual agreement by you and your county Extension office. Knowing the volunteer opportunities and requirements of your local Master Gardener Program will help you to decide if you are able to fulfill the volunteer service that is required to become a certified OSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer. The volunteer service requirement, to be completed out of county Extension offices, varies from 30-70 hours and must be satisfied within one year of completing the online Master Gardener course. Volunteer activities within counties vary according to local needs, but may include: answering gardening questions during the gardening season (in the Extension office, at Farmers Markets, at Garden Fairs, or online), youth gardening instruction, demonstration and community garden projects, educational fairs, etc. For more information on the volunteer activities available to Master Gardeners in your area, you may want to contact your local Extension office.

If you decide that you are not able to fulfill the volunteer service requirement of the OSU Extension Master Gardener Program, you may want to consider enrolling in the online Master Gardener course to pursue a Certificate of Home Horticulture, rather than a Master Gardener badge. The cost of this training is \$400 (compared to the \$300 tuition charged to Master Gardener trainees). The Certificate of Home Horticulture does not entail a service requirement. Thus, those students pursuing a Certificate of Home Horticulture are not obligated to volunteer with the Master Gardener Program at any time.

The 2009 online Master Gardener™ class will begin on Monday, January 6, 2009 and will end on March 30. Classes will be delivered via the BlackBoard Portal System. Once you are accepted into the course, register and pay your tuition via ECampus, you will receive a login ID and password to access the online Master Gardener course. In this course, you will learn about plant types (e.g. woody, herbaceous), garden types (e.g. container, vegetable), and elements (pathogens, soils, insects, management decisions) that influence the growth and vigor of plants in the home garden.

Classroom space is limited to 50 students, so early application is encouraged. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Gail Langellotto
Statewide Coordinator – OSU Master Gardner Program